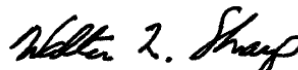




5 November 2009

Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving Day Safety Message

1. The month of November brings two holidays of special significance to Americans—Veterans Day and Thanksgiving Day. Veterans Day was established to honor our veterans and thank those who continue to serve by defending our freedom and our way of life. Thanksgiving is a time when Americans pause to reflect on our beginnings as a nation, and give thanks for the many blessings we enjoy. These celebrations mark the beginning of the winter holiday season and provide well-deserved time off for our Service Members, civilian employees, and family members.
2. During these celebrations and rest periods we must remain attentive to the hazards surrounding us. Excessive alcohol consumption, hazardous road conditions, fall sports activities, and careless mistakes increase the potential for accidents which can lead to needless loss of life and debilitating injuries. The holiday period can also give rise to strong emotions; domestic violence and suicidal behavior.
3. Involved leaders make a tremendous difference in how people conduct themselves during these extended holidays. I want leaders to conduct *Under the Oak Tree* counseling with their subordinates on safe and smart ways to decrease risks, avoid accidents, and plan activities ahead of time. Develop a contract with your Service Members to use the buddy system or optimally stay in Fire Teams of four or five personnel, observe the current curfew policy, and to avoid off-limits areas, political gatherings, and demonstrations.
4. I am convinced that your personal involvement and the chain of command's concern for our Service Members, civilian employees, and family members will make a difference during these two holidays. We must take care of each other and remain ever vigilant. I wish each of you a safe holiday, and I thank you for your continued selfless commitment to our Nation and our Armed Forces.
5. We Go Together!


WALTER L. SHARP
General, US Army
Commander